

should encourage these demonstrations of respect, instead of discouraging them by forcing community members to drive to urban airports hours away from home.

Last year, as part of the fiscal year 2007 Defense authorization, the House passed a similar provision that would have required the military to fly the remains of a fallen soldier to the military airfield nearest the place of burial. Unfortunately, this provision was not included in the final conference version of the bill; however, I think it was a good provision, and Members of the House were right to support it.

My amendment would provide greater flexibility. It would require that, whenever possible, the Department of Defense fly the remains to the nearest military or civilian airport. The amendment would allow the military to use any of the numerous small airports that exist in rural districts, so long as the remains are delivered to a place that is acceptable to the family of the fallen soldier.

Mr. Chairman, the problems I speak of are not only in my district, but we have seen reports from New York to California where this has occurred in the smaller rural districts.

As Americans, we owe a tremendous debt to those families who have given up a loved one in war to protect our freedom. This amendment will eliminate an unfair situation that those families have faced and will help to show our respect and gratitude for the sacrifice they have made.

I ask Members to support my amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, although I don't oppose the amendment, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank the gentleman for his amendment. I think it is absolutely appropriate. We support it.

Mr. Chairman, this is the provision that we put into the law last year when we saw that American fallen service personnel were being transported in what we thought was a less than dignified manner and escorted in a less than dignified manner to their final resting places.

Of course, I went to the Department of Defense initially and had them involved in discussions with the committee with respect to effecting informally a policy that would have dedicated aircraft and would have a dedicated honor guard and military escort that would complete the transport of fallen American service personnel from Dover to their final resting places. We couldn't work something out, so we ended up putting that in law, and having the full support of the other body, that, indeed, is the practice.

I have been around the country now to various places where American heroes have come home, and there has been an outpouring of gratitude from a number of communities and families that in fact the system is working well now with dedicated military aircraft, with the appropriate honor guard escorting the fallen American heroes, and the families now feel much better about the process.

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Now, I would hope that, in practice, the U.S. military is not, as a rule, taking people to a home of record when in fact their final resting place may be hundreds of miles away, but I understand that the gentleman has two cases where that, in fact, would have taken place if they hadn't made contact with the DOD and the DOD hadn't sorted that out.

And so I think this is absolutely appropriate to put into statute what, essentially, they've been doing, as I understand, as a matter of practice in carrying out the mandate that we gave them last year with the new law that came from this committee.

So I support the gentleman. I thank him for offering this amendment, and we certainly support it on this side.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the words of the ranking member, Mr. HUNTER. The difference between what I'm doing here tonight and an amendment we did last year, last year was the closest military airfield. There are no military airfields in my district. My district is 600 miles from one end to the other, and when they want to bring the remains of our soldiers to Detroit or Milwaukee, it is 4, 5, 6 hours for people, for my constituents to go to greet this fallen hero back on U.S. soil. And you have your local groups, your American Legions, your veterans who'd like to welcome that fallen soldier back home, but to drive 4, 5, 6 hours, and one we had last winter was through a terrible snowstorm.

We have had to intervene. We have worked with DOD and others, and they've been pretty good about trying to accommodate everyone. We realize it's hard and it's difficult.

So the only difference is this amendment goes a little farther, not just military airfield but civilian airfields. We have plenty of civilian airfields throughout my district and rural America that can accommodate the planes necessary to bring home our fallen soldiers.

So I would like to thank Mr. SKELTON, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. HUNTER and Mr. SAXTON for their help and support. This is an amendment that we're glad we can do to honor those service men and women and also their families and the local communities when they've fallen in service in honor to their country.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by

the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK), as modified.

The amendment, as modified, was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 49 OFFERED BY MR. CARNEY

The Acting CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 49 printed in House Report 110-151.

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 49 offered by Mr. CARNEY:

At the end of subtitle C of title V, add the following new section:

SEC. 528. SENSE OF CONGRESS WITH RESPECT TO EXTENSION OF TIME LIMITATION FOR USE OF ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATION BENEFITS BY MEMBERS OF SELECTED RESERVE AND MEMBERS OF RESERVE COMPONENT SUPPORTING CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS.

It is the sense of Congress that the time limitation for the use of entitlement to educational assistance under each of subchapters I and II of chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, should be extended to allow an individual entitled to such assistance to use that individual's entitlement during the ten-year period beginning on the date on which the individual is separated from the Ready Reserve or the Selected Reserve of the Ready Reserve, as the case may be.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 403, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARNEY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, I am here today in support of our Nation's veterans. As a lieutenant commander in the Navy Reserve, I know how important our veterans are. I know how critical our National Guard and Reserve are to the Nation's security.

The Montgomery GI bill has provided education to many of our Nation's fine and honorable men and women. After World War II, the GI bill was signed into law and paved the way for many returning soldiers to attain their degrees. In fact, my father earned both his bachelor's and his master's degrees using the GI bill.

However, for our National Guard and Reserve, this is not the case. There's a provision which excludes our National Guard and Reserve from receiving their GI bill after they have left the military.

This amendment, which I am proud to introduce, will express the sense of Congress that we need to lengthen the period of time that Guard and Reserve members have to take advantage of the GI bill. Once they return home they would have up to 10 years to complete their education.

We owe it to our National Guard and Reserve members to have this time. They are very busy in war right now, and they are having a difficult time